

losing backbone and becoming soft, pulpy, molluscous, sentimental, sensational, and therefore useless as far as bearing any message from the Lord is concerned. To give only what the fitful crowds clamor for drags the ministry low enough, for our modern Athenians occupy a lower platform than the Ancients, for they have all their love of novelty and sensation without their wisdom and reverence for truth. The ministry of Christ must teach a more excellent way, and see to it that the nourishment they give is such as sensible men and women need, and such as they find in the great truths and doctrines of the Gospel.

Some ministers and sermons are prized for what they can do by way of moving, exciting, entertaining, and causing a sensation. Such sermons are called popular, practical, suited to the times, etc., etc. But there is danger of both preacher and hearer resting in mere emotion, of drifting into sensation, and demanding from the sermon the same results as those produced by the reading of a novel. But our emotions and sentiments must rest on a solid basis or else they will be fitful and of short duration, and leave the heart like a cold cinder.

The necessity for doctrinal preaching is not realized as it should be by many of our people, and as it must be before there can be any great permanent religious awakening. The *Word* is the sword of the Spirit; and doctrine is just what that Word says to us on the vital matters of *sin* and *grace*. There is nothing that shows the peculiarity of our times more clearly than the meaning attached to the word *practical* as opposed to doctrinal preaching. But a moment's reflection shows there can be no exact, discriminating, accurate thinking on any subject without doctrine. It is doctrine which gathers human thinking on any subject into the *science* of that subject, and in Scriptural teaching doctrine, or systematic thinking is the framework of religious thought and life. Christianity, like every other system of truth, is based on facts. It is a religion animated by living principles, whose essence are the verities of God. In every other department of knowledge, e.g. astronomy, geology, chemistry, etc., it is readily conceded that doctrinal teaching is required; and men are beginning to appreciate more and more systematized truth. This is the growing characteristic of all our seats of learning. Even our public schools